



Bedford Rowing Club

Rowing Club Newsletter April 2025

President's Update – April 2025

Bedford

The recent move to British Summer Time heralded the end of the Head Season, as we now look towards side-by-side racing at the numerous regattas we attend. The Club has performed well during the Head Season, with some excellent results that bode well for the months ahead. I'd like to thank all the volunteers who helped run the three heads we organise; each event was executed with military precision and provided the Club with an invaluable income stream.

I've just returned from a very enjoyable junior training camp (see the full report from the Junior Captain), which this year was held in Figueira da Foz, Portugal. The camp, organised through GoFigueira, provided access to a high-quality 2,000-metre rowing venue and full logistical support. Over the course of the week, 23 junior athletes trained intensively in an ideal environment, making excellent progress in technical skill, fitness, and team cohesion ahead of the 2025 regatta season. In total, the athletes rowed nearly 120 km during the camp, approaching every session with focus and determination. They fully recognised the value of the opportunity and were a credit to the Club throughout the trip.

My thanks go to Jo Moss, the Junior Head Coach, for the countless hours spent organising and running the camp, and to her fellow coaches: Paul Crouch, Ian Pendall, Alex Aldred, Bekah Major, and Jasper Maxim-Godden. I wish the junior section every success as we move into the regatta season. It was a pleasure to spend a week in their company.

Thank you once again to Sam Simons and Nick Weetman for all their hard work and efforts in revamping the Club website, which I hope you'll agree is a major step forward from where we were with the old site. It now provides a professional 'shop window' for prospective members. If you haven't yet seen the new site, it can be found [HERE](https://bedfordrowing.co.uk/). (<https://bedfordrowing.co.uk/>)

In other news, thank you to everyone who financially contributed to the refurbishment of the gym. The final pieces of equipment have now been delivered and will shortly be installed, completing the project. *Rosebud* will also shortly be returned to the Club, having been completely refurbished, with 50% of the cost covered by the Rowing Foundation, whom we'll be thanking in due course.

We've just closed the Club's financial year with a positive outcome, for which I'd like to thank everyone for their help and support. We'll be reporting on this in due course at the Club's AGM later in the summer.

The fire door manufacturers will be measuring up for the new door to the bar, which was damaged during the break-in in January. The door needs to be specially manufactured to fit the opening, which is why the process has taken so long.

You may have seen that on Saturday, 10th May, we have the 159th Bedford Regatta. For those of you new to the town or the sport, this is one of the largest and oldest single-day regattas in the country. Thanks to your support last year, the Club received a payment of just under £4,000 for our assistance. In addition, the Regatta Committee also purchased a new safety boat, which was used last weekend.

The Regatta has five shifts, each two and a half hours long, so any help you can offer would be greatly appreciated. We are particularly looking for volunteers to assist with marshalling between the Town Bridge and the Schools' Boathouse. If you're available to help on the day, even for just one shift, please let us know. Your support makes a huge difference, and it's a great way to be part of this historic event. To volunteer, please reply to this message or follow the link [HERE](#) to register.

And finally, the recent news that Universal Studios is coming to Bedford will, I'm sure, offer the Club excellent opportunities to raise its profile, while also presenting certain challenges for the Great Ouse — the undisputed jewel in Bedford's crown, which may attract significant numbers of tourists to its banks

Spring SBH and Bedford Regatta.

Echoing Hazel's recent comments and thanks on Spond, thank you to everyone who helped out last weekend at the Spring Small Boats Head, which was once again a great success.

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Thank you!

Volunteer Form

<https://forms.office.com/e/KXYaxVXkyQ>

Women's Squad

April kicked off with 10 members of BRC from the women's masters, men's masters and Explore Plus squads jetting off to Tuscany for 5 days of rowing coaching and wine drinking and generally having fun in Italy. Once back it was time to put the honed technique into action at the April Small Boats Head.

Across the women in the club, the entries were entered 2 senior quads, 4 masters doubles, 1 masters quad, 1 senior single and 5 masters singles. The W masters E doubles clinched 1st, 2nd, and 3rd spots in their event with Sara Reay and Rachel Armstrong taking the top spot. As they did in WMasters E/F quads pairing up with Alison Cox and Madelaine Brodie. In the second spot was a Bedford Star composite which included Bedford's Rebecca Digby.

Alison Cox had a busy weekend racing sweep oar as she was the first across the line in the bow seat racing for Oxford University in the Veterans Boat Race. The verdict in favour of Oxford was 4 lengths in a record time of 8 mins 11 seconds.

We welcome Hannah Deane making the step from the Explore group and Georgia Goddard who is new to club.

Lydia Swift





‘A Lift’ for Women’s Masters and a ‘Thank you’

We’d like to give a big shoutout to Sam and all involved for the incredible efforts in revamping the Gym over the past few months. His hard work has not only refreshed the space but also made it more inclusive—especially for the **Women’s Masters Strength Training Group** whose members range from 55 to 70 years young.

Introducing lighter bars and entry-level weights, BRC has helped create a more welcoming environment. These thoughtful changes have empowered more members to train confidently and consistently.

“It’s really great to attend a session of exercises tailored to the specific physical needs of masters women. The session caters for all fitness levels. Maximising our strength and fitness to take into the boat and into life in general” -Claire Sivills

'It's great to have a focus on using weights every week as part of the land training programme to help with loss of bone density in older women and to make our boats go faster. Great to see collaboration between BRC and Star Club, pooling resources, and expertise"- SL Star Club

“Stronger bodies, stronger mindset. A great space to build confidence, focus, resilience, and spirit”- SR

“I’ve been avoiding the gym, but now I’m in here every week. It’s a small change that’s made a big difference.” –

If you would like to join us, contact Rebecca Digby 07593025444

Bedford Star Composite Masters Women on their way to Banjoles 25....

We entered a quad and three coxed fours at the recent Bedford Small Boats Head in a “mix & match” format to see where our strengths might lie for the Regatta Season. The E quad came 2nd out of 10 entries, a pleasing result after only 3 practice sessions. The F & G 4+ crews came 3rd, 4th & 5th out of 6 entries with a range of 3-19 seconds off the winning pace. Onwards now with technical & strength training to improve our squad performance 🏊‍♀️ 🏊‍♀️ 🏊‍♀️ 🏊‍♀️ 🏊‍♀️



Rebecca Digby

Men's Squad

The men finished the head season well at our small boats head. The Seniors were out in force in bow 4/stern 4 combinations of 4+ and 4-. Both coxed 4s finished 2nd and 3rd as did both coxless 4s. Considering this was off the back of their staycation rowing camp from Wednesday to Saturday, during which they had worked extremely hard and were very tired, these were promising results. Thanks, as always, to Lucien for his expert coxing.

The Masters men were thin on the ground due to a certain stag do taking place. Matthew and Szelim held the fort here in Bedford as did Sara, finishing first in her MasE4x (Rachel Armstrong, Sara Raey, Alison Cox, and Maddie Brodie) and first again in MasE2x with Rachel. Good to know that some of the squad were sober that weekend!

Unfortunately, we have lost Jack Bufton who has had to move away for work , but we have Will Cave, Alex Loveday and Sammy Moss jumping in to help.

Our next events will be regattas at Evesham (3rd May) and Wallingford (4th May).

Explore Plus

The Explore 8 has been really getting down to some technical work under the guidance of James Watson and are coming along. Thank you, James. Thanks to Emma James as ever for her coxing, especially coxing complete novices on a very busy river which can be challenging and stressful at times.

Rami, Rita, and Andrea continue to progress in their singles, especially following the rowing camp in Italy. We welcomed Louise Dickson back from injury and new graduates from L2R Dinka Miocinovic, Hanna Sparks and Julia Lence who have had their first taste of sweep and really enjoyed it.

We always need more helpers for Explore Plus and you don't need to be a coach. We need people to cycle the bank and occasionally sit in a boat (thank you Paul Pointing for subbing and looking after the bow of Bombardier). Thanks to Nick Weetman and Kevin Walsh for turning up every week to help. If you'd like to help out (it doesn't have to be every week) contact Jayne.

Regatta Tea Tent

Just a reminder about the need for volunteers to help run the tea tent on Saturday 10th May as well as bakers to bake lots of yummy cake. Just turn up on the day. Also, if anyone has any old plates they no longer use, please let Jayne know and leave them in the Rower's kitchen. The plan is to make them into cake stands so all sizes are welcome.

Jayne Smith.

Rowing Camp 2025 - Pisa, Italy

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Eager to start

3rd April 2025 - 10 rowers from BRC arrived in Calcinaia, near Pisa. Having landed at 9:30, it was straight to Canottieri Cavallini to begin training in the afternoon with Matteo Stefanini. In beautiful sunny weather the group took to the River Arno in 3 groups for an introductory row.



Next morning we started training proper, with a session starting at 7am. Leaving the hotel at 6:30 I was beginning to wonder what I'd got myself into, but once on the water, as the morning sun hit the water, it became the most beautiful row. Each group rowed for 90 minutes before swapping out for another set of crews. After a break for lunch then another 3 sessions followed in the afternoon. One of the great things about how Matteo plans the camp is that he builds a bespoke camp based on what the group wants to do. And we wanted to enjoy ourselves as much as we wanted to row, so in the evening Matteo had organised a wine tasting evening followed by a superb dinner at Villa Petrolino in the Tuscan countryside.



Matteo is an Italian Olympic rower and his attention to the detail of our rowing was forensic. None of us was spared his microscopic examination of our technique, pored over in detail in video analysis sessions. It was amazing that each of us, no matter how experienced we are, had our eyes opened as to how we could improve our rowing. Saturday morning was a repeat of Friday, but just the one rowing session. At lunch we jumped into the cars and headed in Florence. The original plan had been to row through the city passing under the Ponte Vecchio, but the torrential rain and flooding just weeks ago had swept away the club's pontoons

and motor boats. So - no rowing! Just the most delicious lunch in the swankiest rowing club I have ever been in!



The club is on the banks of the River Arno a matter of metres from the Ponte Vecchio. It is some 10m below the street above and the boathouse is in tunnels running under the Uffizi Galleries. Sunday morning dawned and Matteo had decided that rather than rowing we needed to be taught how to stretch properly for rowing. Enter Ylenia, a sweet young lady who proceeded to make us put parts of our bodies where they really ought not to be able to go!



Last night and Matteo had arranged for us to enjoy an authentic Tuscan BBQ with an Italian family in their hilltop hideaway. These are basic affairs where families go for the weekend. Not one of the family could speak English, so we relied on Matteo initially until the international language of wine and good food had us all having great fun.

The final morning and we were back into the cars to drive over to Pisa to row through the city. At the end of the camp we were all unanimous - we would most definitely do it all again, and we are confident that next year's camp (there will be one!) will be over-subscribed. This Blog was written by Nick Weetman and is available to read on the Blog section of the new website.

Accepted Places for Turning boats.

A reminder

When proceeding upstream from beyond the school's boathouses the first one is Star Club, the second is just before the Twin Bridges. Downstream the turning place is beyond the school's boathouses. There is an additional turning place at Monkey Island for crews returning to BRC. Returning to Star Club, crews turn near the new footbridge by the Courts.

Chris Wisbey.

BRC Subs

It has been some time since the first reminders about the new bank account for subs were published on Spond and in Newsletters. As time is moving on, we would be most grateful if those who still need to make the change to the new account would kindly make that change.

Henley Royal Regatta

During Regatta week some BRC members have reserved a Pavillion (mid course) for Thursday the 3rd of July. Stay dry/shaded/comfortable and watch the racing, also keeping your belongings secure. Snacks and water available all day (included). There are a few places left. Enquiries to anne.hignell@bedfordrowing.co.uk

Anne Hignell

This week some of the Recs will be involved in a charity bag pack in the community, watch out for club colours.

Thanks to All of you who have contributed to the newsletter this month and thank you to you All for reading.

Best Wishes.

The Committee